



“Art is a means of expression that must be understood by everybody, everywhere. It grows out of the earth, the textures of our lives, and our experience.” — Rufino Tamayo

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Rufino Tamayo was twelve years old when he arrived in Mexico City to live with relatives after the death of his parents. He had been born in 1899 in Oaxaca, traditional home of indigenous Zapotec families from whom his father was descended. There, he had experienced the beauty and pattern of Oaxacan traditional dress as well as the simplified forms of its ancient crafts. In Mexico City he lived near an open-air market full of the vibrant colors of fruits, vegetables, spices, and flowers. These images stayed with him when, after high school, he began training for a career as an artist. Tamayo lived for many years in New York and Paris and, although impacted by the art he saw there, he never forgot those early influences. In 1964, Tamayo returned to Mexico City and lived there until his death in 1991.

His story continues in what he left behind, not only his own artwork, but two museums — the Museo Rufino Tamayo, designed by the artist and built in Mexico City; and a second museum in Oaxaca that holds his collection of ancient Meso American artifacts. You can visit these places in Mexico today, and see Tamayo’s work at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. These coloring pages reference just two of his many paintings, drawings, and sculptures included in SBMA’s collection.

LOOKING CLOSELY

What is the central figure in the painting? What do you think the dog is doing? Howling? Smiling? Notice the repeated curved shapes of the moon, the dog’s tongue and tail, as well as the swell of the earth he stands on. What colors do you see? How do they make you feel? When you color your version you might want to use lighter, warmer colors to change the mood.

This subject was one that Tamayo returned to throughout his career — the dog howling at the moon or baring its teeth. It was possibly inspired not only by actual dogs, but also by those appearing in Aztec and Maya mythology. Write your own story about why dogs howl at the moon.

